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Live the 10: No Murder

Ten Values the Build Strong Families
The Sixth Commandment
Deuteronomy 5:17 (NIV) "You shall not murder.

Introduction

It might be tempting to skip the shortest of the commandments, just 4 words in English and two in Hebrew. But there is so much confusion over this commandment it is good that we spend this time so that we are very clear on the application of this commandment to our lives.

If the only thing we accomplished was to clear up the confusion in society on what this commandment means, we have accomplished something.

First of all if you asked someone, "Is the commandment "thou shall not kill" one of the ten commandments, most everyone would say "yes".

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But thou shall not kill is not one of the commandments.

The 2 second commandment on human relationships and the 6th commandment of the ten is:

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Thou shall not murder.

This is not just some fine point of semantics.

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Killing is very different than murder.

First of all, killing and murder are two very different words in both English and Hebrew.

But since our source language is Hebrew, and that is the language God choose to write this command, we will look first to Hebrew to help us understand the difference.

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The Hebrew word Kill **שָׁחַ** (*šā·ḥāḏ*): v.; **slaughter**, kill, i.e., take the life of a creature

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The Hebrew word Murder is רצח (*rā·šāḥ*): v. **murder**, i.e., take the life one another so as to cause a state of death

What are the implications of this difference?

First the sixth commandment, thou shall not murder:

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It is not prohibiting killing animals

The Bible is very clear about the difference between human life and animal life.

In the Bible, many times, God commanded that animals be sacrificed. One of the things you need to know is that God never contradicts Himself. He wouldn't say one thing one place and something differently another place. You interpret an unclear passage with a clear one. Many places in Scripture, It is very clear, He says it's OK to kill animals.

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Genesis 9:3 (NIV)

³ Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

You don't have to be a vegetarian unless you just want to be. It's not commanded in the Bible. It's OK to eat animals for meat.

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2. It is not prohibiting capital punishment.

May times in Scripture God commands capital punishment. For certain crimes He says this is worthy of the death penalty.

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Leviticus 24:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ “ If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death.

That is very clear.

God says, there are some things, like murder, that demand the death penalty.

To maintain order in our society, God has delegated His authority to the government. The Bible says that God has allowed human governments to be set up to maintain law and order and punish wrong doers, including capital punishment.

"The government is there to serve God for your benefit ... they carry out God's revenge by punishing wrongdoers." Romans 13

God says, I've set these governments up, I allow them, there is no perfect government, no one that is right in everything they do, but they do keep law and order. The New International Version calls the government an agent of justice.

God wants justice in this world. But He demands swift justice which our system of appeals has made a mockery of. When President William McKinley was assassinated his assassin was caught, convicted, and executed 53 days later. Do you think that would happen today? Not a chance. When Theodore Bundy was finally executed a couple of years ago after killing all of those women, it was 11 years after the crime. Who paid for all those 11 years? You did, the taxpayers. That's not justice. Oliver Wendall Holmes said, "Justice postponed is justice denied." Some will say "I don't think capital punishment really deters criminals." It does the one executed. He's not going to rape anybody anymore, or murder anybody anymore. By the way, the average life sentence is now eight years.

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3. It's not prohibiting going to war.

God says there are some things that are worth fighting for. There are some things that are worth dying for. It's right to fight in order to preserve freedom. It's right to fight in order to defend innocent people. It's right to fight to stop the spread of evil. In fact he says

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Eccl. 3:8 "There is a time for war".

Edmund Burke said, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

If men and women had not stepped forward to put their lives on the line for freedom, we would be speaking Japanese or German today...if we were even alive.

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So the 6th commandment is not a prohibiting killing. In fact when we read the whole bible, we find God says there are situations in which killing is appropriate.

But the Bible does prohibit Murder.

I want to thank Rev. Rick Warren for the succinct insight he gives in these first three explanations, and I use his explanations with permission.

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So let's now look at what this command prohibits. What does it mean to live the 6th of the 10?

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Living the 6th of 10 means...

Living a life free of committing murder

So you say, well, believe me...I may have problems with some of the other 10, but I have not murdered anyone, and I am not considering murdering anyone.

And we could simply move on, maybe, until we read the whole bible again, and come upon the words of Christ and the Apostle who warn us:

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Matt 5:21–22 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘*You shall not murder*, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ **22** But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

Hatred.

1 John 3:15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

So this commandment has much direct 21st century application.

I wonder what this command has to say to hate talk radio? On both sides of the isle, but before we go too far pointing out others “specks” it would be good to look at some commonly missed logs.

This commandment prohibits murder. What does that mean?

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MURDER — the unlawful killing of one person by another, especially with premeditated malice.

After the Fall in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1–24), it was not long before the first murder occurred (Gen. 4:8), as Cain killed Abel his brother.

According to the Book of Genesis, mankind is created in God's image (Gen. 1:26–27). Murdering a human being, therefore, is a serious crime and must be punished (Gen. 9:6). The sixth of the Ten Commandments states, “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17). But it is not just prohibited in these Old Testament texts, this commandment is quoted several times in the New Testament, “Jesus said, ‘You shall not murder,’ ” (Matt. 19:18) & (Luke 18:20)

Paul reiterated this in his letter to the Romans:

Romans 13:9 (NIV)

⁹The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

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We are not to take a person’s life, why? And this is key:

Because a person is made in the image of God.

We belong to God. We are his. The breath of life we breathe comes from him.

He has determined the day of our conception and the day of giving up the ghost, the breathing of our last breath.

Last week we showed that the ten commandments are in two sets. The first four tell us how our God wants to be loved. The last six tell us how our neighbor wants to be loved.

It only makes sense that our neighbor does not want us to end his life for him. But as Jesus teaches, when we curse our neighbor it is as good as murdering them. For the Christian, watching our motive and intent is even more the focus than the letter of the law.

Next week we will talk about the 7th commandment, “Thou shall not commit adultery.” But for the Christian, when speaking about keeping the 7th of 10, Jesus says:

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Matthew 5:28 (NIV)

²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

So how does Thou shall not murder apply to us in the 21st Century?

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So when God says “no murder” He is saying, “No Euthanasia”.

Euthanasia is medical mercy killing. It is Murder. It is the premeditated taking of one’s life

We are not to murder our neighbor. Even if we determine it would be merciful to do so. Our neighbor is made in God’s image. We are not to end what God has begun.

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So in the sixth commandment he is saying no to abortion.

So when God says “no murder” He is saying, “No Abortion”.

Abortion is murder.

Even if we think it is “merciful” to kill a deformed child, a child conceived in incest, or rape.

We do not do another crime to compensate for a crime.

Every crime has a consequence.

Very rarely is that consequence just momentary. Most crimes have very lasting consequences.

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And last, when God is saying no to murder, he is saying no to suicide.

We are not to murder ourselves. He is saying no to suicide.

The sixth commandment is a direct command to everyone to never even consider it an option to take one’s own life.

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So to summarize, there are 4 key 21st century applications.

Jesus words not to curse our neighbor, for that is like murdering them.

We are not to participate in assisting another in taking their life.

We are not to participate in abortion.

We are not to participate in suicide.

Worship Team comes forward

Conclusion

So we see, while we may think that the 6th commandment doesn’t have any application to us because we haven’t been thinking of taking a gun and murdering someone, the truth is that we need this command more than anything in our culture.

The 6th command is truth that sets us free.

I hope you will reconsider the 6th of 10, and recommit yourself again, not just to the letter of the law, for our Lord said:

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Matthew 5:17-19 (NLT)

Teaching about the Law

¹⁷ “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.